

true marriage and Mary became a mother, but Joseph was not the father. Mary was a virgin, nevertheless. This might all pass, as it does in modern times, as an old tradition which is not worth discussing, but the mediaeval people turned it in every possible direction, and were never tired of drawing new deductions from it. At last, it consists in simply affirming two contradictory definitions of the same word at the same time. There are, in the mythologies, many cases of virgin birth. The Scandinavian valkyre was the messenger of the god to the hero and the life attendant of the latter. He loved her, but she, to keep her calling, must remain a virgin. Otherwise she gave up her divine position and deathlessness in order to live and die with him.¹ The notion of merit and power in renunciation is heathen, not Christian, in origin. The most revolting application of it was when two married people renounced conjugal intimacy in order to be holy.

420. Marriage in early Christianity. In the earliest centuries of Christianity very little attention seems to have been paid to marriage by the Christians. It was left to the mores of

each national group, omitting the sacrifices to the heathen gods. It is not possible to trace the descent of Christian marriage from Jewish, Greek, or Roman marriage, but the best authorities think that its fundamental idea is Jewish (carnal union), not Roman (jural relations).² "The church found the solemn ceremonies for concluding marriage existing [in each nation]. No divine command in regard to this matter is to be found " [in the New Testament].³ The church, in time, added new ceremonies to suit its own views. Hence there was the same variety at first inside the church as there had been before Christianity. There can, therefore, be no doubt that, throughout the Latin branch of the church, the usages and theories of Roman marriage passed over into the Christian church. Lecky says that at Rome monogamy was from the earliest times strictly enjoined ; and it was one of the greatest benefits that have resulted from the expansion of Roman power, that it made this type dominant in Europe.⁴ Although

¹ Wisen, *Qvinnan i Wardens Forntid*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

² Freisen, *Gesch. des kanon. Eherechts*, 154,

* *Eur. Morals*, II, 298.